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Relations of anti-slavery to religion. By  
Charles K. Whipple. [New York, American Anti-  
Slavery Society, 1856]

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## RELATIONS OF ANTI-SLAVERY TO RELIGION.

BY CHARLES K. WHIPPLE.

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THE Anti-Slavery movement (as conducted, for twenty-three years past, by the American Anti-Slavery Society) was at its commencement, and has ever since been, thoroughly and emphatically a *religious* enterprise. The earliest official documents of that Society (its Constitution and its Declaration of Sentiments, both adopted at Philadelphia in 1833) show that its prominent and preponderating appeal was to religious considerations; that Slavery, whatever else it might be, was *first*, "a heinous crime in the sight of God;" that immediate emancipation was the divinely imposed "duty" of the slaveholder, whether he recognized it as his pecuniary interest or not; that a public sentiment adverse to slavery was to be awakened *first* by "appeals to the consciences" of the people; that the elevation of the character and condition of the people of color was to be sought "by encouraging their intellectual, moral, and religious improvement;" and that it was proposed, among the means to this end, "to enlist the *pulpit* in the cause of the slave, and to aim at a purification of the *churches* from all participation in the guilt of slavery."

It is obvious that the founders of the American Anti-Slavery Society, in this plan for the accomplishment of a religious end by religious means, confidently relied upon the support of "the pulpit." They had attributed the silence of the clergy respecting slavery to the same source with their own former quiescence, partly thoughtlessness, partly ignorance of the essential character and the actual workings of the system, and partly pre-occupation with subjects nearer home; and they had confidently expected that when a sin so gross and so widely extended, and moreover entwined so intimately and injuriously with their own ecclesiastical system, was brought to their notice, the clergy would at once take measures, first for the purification of their own churches and ecclesiastical bodies, and next for that of the community and the country. But subsequent events showed this charitable judgment not to be well founded. The great majority of ministers, of every denomination, remained utterly indifferent both to the facts and the arguments which were set forth concerning slavery, continuing to fraternize with slaveholders both in church and state; and the flocks felt no call to renounce or oppose that which their pastors allowed. Thus the church, which had been looked to as the field best prepared for the reception of Anti-Slavery truth, was found to be no more accessible than the congregation; and both church and congregation soon learned to appeal to the indifference of so pious and excellent a man as their minister, as a sufficient reason for their own indifference to the guilt and the danger involved in slavery.

The failure of their efforts in this direction wrought as a stimulus instead of a discouragement to the Abolitionists. If the disease had taken a deeper hold than even *they* had supposed, if slavery was to be tacitly allowed by the church as well as supported by the state, and if even the teachers of

religion refused to oppose it, the more need was there for strenuous and unwearied exertions on their own part. The harvest being greater and the laborers fewer than they had expected, those who were in the field must work with double diligence. And they *did* so work.

But they soon found that not only indifference, but opposition, was to be encountered from the clergy. Having undertaken to call the nation to repentance for a great sin, and to immediate abandonment of it, they of course preached this doctrine on Sunday as well as on Monday, Tuesday, or Wednesday; and presently they were stigmatized by the clergy as violators of the Sabbath. Making large use, as their previous culture and habits of thought dictated, of the denunciations of prophets, apostles, and evangelists against oppression, and finding these injunctions neutralized, sometimes directly and sometimes indirectly, by men who called themselves ministers of the gospel, they saw the fitness, and did not shrink from the painful duty, of quoting what was said by the same authorities against corrupt priests, false prophets, blind guides, dumb dogs that bark not, and hireling shepherds; and for this the corrupters of religion called them *revilers* of religion. Finally, when, having proved by indisputable argument and overwhelming evidence that slavery is the sum of all villanies, they were met by the assertion that "slavery is authorized by the Bible," they replied, "*If it be so*, so much the worse for the Bible,"—for this their clerical opponents declared them *infidels*.

Though by no means the first, or the only instance, the Anti-Slavery Society is yet a signal and noteworthy instance of an evil *reputation* not only coexisting with, but growing out of, a good *character*. The Abolitionists, after their first surprise at the recreancy of the clergy to their own principles, were very little concerned at being called ill names by those whom they had shown to be in the wrong. They could afford to be censured for recommending right things because they were right, by men who tolerated things contrary to justice and humanity because, (they said) they found no prohibition of them in the Bible. They therefore went on, continuing to quote, as the supreme authority, "the higher law" of *right*, and have so continued till the present time, though the theologians under Moses Stuart combined with the politicians under Daniel Webster to scoff at that rule as unpractical and fanatical, avowing their own chief standard of duty (in relation to slavery) to be the Constitution of the United States.

If the systematic allowance by clergymen, and from (so called) religious considerations, of a system combining the height of oppression with the depth of meanness, be well suited to excite the tears of the weeping philosopher, the mirth of the laughing philosopher must no less be awakened by the charge of infidelity, made by the same clergymen, against persons who are vainly calling them and their people to repentance for "a heinous sin in the sight of God."

The Abolitionists have quoted Scripture quite as much as their opponents, but with this peculiarity, that they have always quoted it on the side of right and justice. Their offence has been that they have not bowed their heads in silence when an interpretation of Scripture favoring *injustice* and oppression has been brought against them. Preaching to a slaveholding Union of Northern and Southern States their duty to undo the heavy burdens, to let the oppressed go free, and to break every yoke, they have cared nothing for the allegation, true or false, that Abraham and Job were slaveholders. Engaged in helping the robbed and wounded traveller, they have neither stopped to pull off their hats to the Priest and Levite passing by on

the other side, nor regarded the cry of "infidelity" which those reverend personages set up against them. Regarding a man as better than a sheep, they have not scrupled to pull him out of a pit, even on the Sabbath day. Finding Onesimus to have been sent back to Philemon, "not as a servant, but as a brother beloved," they have not seen in this message any justification of the Fugitive Slave Law; and they regard the positive precept of Jesus, "Whatsoever ye would that men should do unto you, do ye even so to them," as infinitely more weighty than the negative assertion that he is nowhere recorded to have claimed immediate emancipation for the Roman slaves, even supposing, what is yet unproved, that he ever came in contact with slaves at all.

Steadily and invariably, through the twenty-three years of its existence, the American Anti-Slavery Society has adhered to this high ground. From first to last, they have denounced the act of slaveholding as "a sin against God;" they have declared immediate emancipation to be the "duty" of every master, as well as the right of every slave; and they have steadily disregarded the overtures that have been made, sometimes from political and sometimes from ecclesiastical sources, to increase their numbers by lowering their platform, abating their denunciations against the sin, and moderating their demand upon the sinner. They have been urged in the most persevering and importunate manner, not to represent slaveholding as *absolutely* and *invariably* sinful; not to require *immediate* repentance and reformation; not to insist on placing popular vices in the same category with unpopular ones; and, above all, not to impugn a man's *Christian* character, and fitness for church membership, on the ground of his systematically practising the "sum of all villanies." Despite all the persuasions, promises, threats, and vituperations that have been brought to bear upon them, they have steadily insisted on bringing slavery face to face with this one test — "WHETHER IT BE RIGHT IN THE SIGHT OF GOD."

The Anti-Slavery Society is not, and has never pretended to be, a church; neither are its principles presented to the community as covering the whole ground of Christian duty. The relation with which this association concerns itself, namely, that of self-assumed ownership on one side and compulsory chattelhood on the other, is only one of the relations of life; it has, however, extensively interwoven itself with other relations, combining a vast array of social, political, and ecclesiastical influences for its support; and the claim of the Abolitionists is, that they have followed it, through all its windings, with the touchstone of RIGHT; that they have demanded that this, like all other relations, shall be judged by *Christian principles* instead of by custom, or interest, or an unjust law, or a selfish expediency; that they have felt, and spoken, and acted for those in bonds *as bound with them*; that they have maintained, in the face of calumny, persecution, and discouragement of every sort, the rightful supremacy of divine laws over human; and that neither bribes nor threats, neither the thunder of the state nor the anathema of the church, neither the sophistry of Webster nor of Stuart, nor yet the specious pretence of gaining more for the slave by demanding less, have for a moment prevailed with them to recede from this commanding position. They have pursued, and mean still to pursue, a Christian end by Christian means.

None have a better right than the Abolitionists to address the American people in the words of Paul to the Galatians — "Am I therefore become your enemy because I tell you the truth?" They have given the very highest evidence of disinterested sincerity in voluntarily exposing themselves to reproach and contumely to advance the end which they deem

most beneficial alike to the slave and the master. The very act which unreflecting people charge upon them as a fault, — the plain exposure of unfaithfulness to their duty in a class of men so popularly respected as the clergy, — is the best proof that they are really seeking the welfare of others, and not their own credit or profit. They claim, and *prove*, that their work in behalf of the slave is a good work, pursued in a right manner; but they may also claim, and can thoroughly prove, that in doing this work for the slave, they are collaterally doing an immense service to the cause of religion: that in plainly demonstrating wherein the professed teachers of Christianity are unfaithful to their work, — in pointing out as false prophets and blind guides those who, speaking in the name of Jesus, teach the doctrines of Daniel Webster and Franklin Pierce, and declare that, if there be any conflict between these, the latter should be obeyed in preference to the former, — they (the Abolitionists) are acting in the interest of religion not less than of Anti-Slavery; that the advancement of Christianity itself, in this country, demands the precise course they are taking; that, as the very root and essence of true religion is confidence in the infinite excellence, the absolute perfection of the Creator — as the imputation to him of injustice in his own acts, or any countenance of injustice in the laws which he has given to men, would be (in the mind that accepted such an idea) a weakening of the very foundation of Christianity — as the duty of loving and serving God results from his being good and not evil, and as both love and service will of necessity be deteriorated by the supposition that injustice forms a part, either of his character or his commands — and that, since the very first step towards reclaiming the wanderer is to show him the direction in which he has been led astray, and point out the course by which he should return, — so *the indispensable preliminary to a thorough and effective preaching of the gospel in the United States is, to show the churches and congregations how, and how far, and by whom, they have been led to pervert religion to the support of slavery.*

There are doubtless many persons who (having neither sought it themselves, nor read it when collected by the Abolitionists) are yet unacquainted with the immense body of evidence which exists in proof of the unfaithfulness of the clergy to their duty in relation to slavery in all the large and popular seats of this country. For the instruction of such persons, a statement, and a few specimens of this unfaithfulness, will here be given.

I charge upon the churches of all the great sects in the United States, and preëminently upon the clergy, the leaders of those churches, that, assuming to be “the salt of the earth and the light of the world,” or, in other words, assuming to be not only the chief, but the divinely constituted and authorized conservators of religion and good morals, a great and controlling majority of them in each sect hold one or another of the following positions: —

1. They make no effort,\* by word or deed, to put a stop to slavery.

\* This may be illustrated by the position of the Rev. Dr. Lyman Beecher. Probably no clergyman has been a more thorough representative of the system called “Evangelical,” or “Orthodox,” for the last thirty years, than he. He was at the zenith of his reputation when the Anti-Slavery movement commenced. But not only had he never commenced it, not only had he never been moved by his religion to say one word against the slaveholders with whom he was then, as now, in ecclesiastical connection, nor one word for the relief of the slaves, whom he knew to be unjustly held in bondage by his orthodox “brethren;” he declined acting in that direction at all, even incidentally, even so much as he has acted against intemperance, when such action was formally proposed to him. Twenty years ago, before Anti-Slavery had become complicated with the calumnious accusations that are now poured upon its advocates, when Mr. Garrison, then believing in the honesty and

II. They throw the weight of their influence actively against those who are seeking its immediate and unconditional abolition.

III. Some of them practise slaveholding, and defend it; and others actively and thoroughly defend it, without the temptation or the opportunity to practise it.

IV. The remainder (*including some who freely comment on the vicious character of slavery, and oppose its extension northward*) welcome to their full fellowship, as Christians and Christian ministers, both the above-mentioned classes; namely, those who hold slaves, and those, both North and South, who maintain from the Bible the right to hold them.

V. The condition of heart and life which they recognize and inculcate as "piety," or "evangelical Christianity," and which qualifies a man for membership in their churches, neither excludes the practice of slaveholding, nor requires opposition to it,—the good standing of their church members being absolutely unaffected by slaveholding, slave trading, and slave breeding; while, on the other hand, the expression of any active and energetic opposition to slavery is regarded as a disturbing force, an objectionable element, in their religious meetings, and specially to be deprecated when there is most fervor and earnestness of religious feeling.

Among the evidences that the churches and clergy of the United States really hold this position in regard to slavery, namely, ignoring its anti-Christian character, acquiescing in its indefinite continuance in the South, fraternizing with those who practise and defend it, and opposing those who most directly and actively oppose it, are the following:—

1. The American Tract Society, a great incorporated body, supported by, and a fair representative of, all the sects which call themselves "Evangelical," and declaring its purpose in the distribution of books and tracts to be to "promote the interests of vital godliness and good morals," not only refuses to publish and distribute tracts against slavery, but persists in this refusal on the very ground that it cannot oppose what the American churches support. It also takes pains to conciliate the slaveholders by cutting out from its editions of works originally published elsewhere, such testimonials against slavery as they may incidentally contain, sometimes persuading the authors to consent to such mutilation.

2. The American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions, a great incorporated body, also supported by, and fairly representing, all the sects which call themselves "Evangelical," refuses to exclude slaveholders from its mission churches, also, on the ground that it cannot oppose what the American churches support; and thus at once throws its weight into the scale of slavery, and corroborates our position respecting the corrupt state of the popular religion.

purity of the clergy, was appealing to them to aid in exposing the abominations of slavery, and in rousing at least the church to free herself from the disgrace of sustaining it, and when, seeing that the great champion of orthodoxy did not spontaneously recognize the claims of two millions of slaves upon the church under whose shadow they were oppressed, Mr. Garrison made it a special business to seek him, spread before him the facts, and urge him to do *something* in opposition to slavery; he declined, on the ground that he was occupied with other things of more consequence; and in the quarter of a century which has since elapsed, during which he has been actively fraternizing with slaveholders, and building up the form of religion which authenticates them as Christians, he seems to have advanced no farther in opposition to slavery than the discovery that it is undesirable for Kansas and Nebraska. I quote Dr. Beecher as a fair specimen of the influence of the popular religion upon a popular sin like slavery.

On the other hand, I wish distinctly to testify that a few clergymen (most of whom bear the stigma of heterodoxy as well as of anti-slavery) have stood, and still stand, prominent among the boldest, truest, firmest, and most self-sacrificing friends of the slave.



3. The American Bible Society, a great incorporated body, also supported by, and fairly representing, all the sects which call themselves "Evangelical," has gone a step further than this, namely, it has circulated, in one of its official documents, an elaborate representation of the Bible as a proslavery book, characterizing this representation (Bible Society Record, November 1854 and April 1855) as an "IMPORTANT DOCUMENT," and an "EXCELLENT ADDRESS."

4. Every one knows the assiduity with which Daniel Webster devoted the last years of his life to advocating the perpetuity of the American Union; and every one also knows that the means by which he sought this end were exhortations to the North to "conquer their prejudices" against slavery, to consent to its indefinite continuance and extension, and to fortify it on the Northern border by the seizure and surrender of fugitive slaves. He not only gave these counsels to his political friends and the Northern people at large, but he expressly claimed that, in relation to slavery and all other matters connected with politics, the Constitution of the United States was to be revered and obeyed as supreme, and "the higher law" (if any such existed) set aside as subordinate. This was either asserted or taken for granted in all the speeches and political letters of that portion of his life. Here is one of the direct expressions of it:—

"When nothing else will answer, they [the abolitionists] invoke religion, and speak of the higher law. Gentlemen, this North Mountain is high, the Blue Ridge higher still, the Alleghanies higher than either, and yet this 'higher law' ranges further than an eagle's flight above the highest peaks of the Alleghanies. No common vision can discern it; no common and unsophisticated conscience can feel it; the hearing of common men never learns its high behests; and therefore one would think it is not a safe law to be acted upon in matters of the highest practical moment. It is the code, however, of the abolitionists of the North." — *Speech at Capon Springs, Virginia, June 26, 1851.*

What was the response of the clergy of New England to these declarations of the most prominent statesman of their time? It is to be remembered that, as the Whigs and Democrats of that period vied with each other in expressions of allegiance to the Fugitive Slave Law, there were many zealous advocates and practisers of this system of immoral philosophy in every one of the congregations to which these clergymen preached. What, then, did they say to and of Daniel Webster, when he publicly scoffed at the claim that there was a law higher than the Constitution of the United States, and when a prominent and fundamental feature of the course pursued through the last years of his life was the assumption of a right entirely to disregard religion when politics were in question?

The great majority of the New England clergy, (tacitly conceding the points assumed by Webster,) said not one word against them; of the remainder, far the greater number gave explicit testimony in favor of Webster's position. (perhaps a hundred and fifty sermons to this effect having been *printed*.) while a few\* made a prompt and manly protest against it. Professor Stuart, the most prominent in learning and station of the Orthodox clergy, took the lead in authenticating Webster's position, elaborately arguing the case in his pamphlet entitled "Conscience and the Constitu-

\* Dr. Edward Beecher enumerates eighteen clergymen (taking in New York and New Jersey with New England) who have published sermons or other addresses to this effect. Doubtless there were more, and a larger number not published. But what are these among so many of the opposite character? The exceptions prove the rule.



tion;" and long before that publication, he had advised his theological students not to speak nor pray against slavery in public. Rev. Nehemiah Adams, of Boston, takes the same position, saying, (page 128 of his "South-Side View of Slavery,") "While it [the Constitution] remains, *all our appeals to a higher law are fanaticism.*"

5. The great annual meetings of the principal sects in the United States, at which their representatives, assembled from all parts of the country, discuss, in sessions continued through several days, the position, progress, purposes, desires, and modes of operation of the religious denominations which they represent, form one important criterion by which those sects should be judged. Their proceedings are published at length, from year to year, in the organs of their respective denominations, and they have, thus far, never commenced, nor even proposed, any decisive action against slavery in the South, nor ever refused to fraternize with slaveholders and defenders of slavery, as Christians.

6. The system of "caste" which, partly by law and partly by public opinion, stigmatizes colored people as an inferior race, and forcibly keeps them in a degraded social position, receives the support and coöperation of the churches as corporate bodies, of the church members in private life, and of the clergy as their leaders and teachers in both these departments, as fully as of any other classes in the community, though all these contend vigorously against a similar system, when it is practised as far off as Hindostan, and by persons out of their church communion.

Even the above statement does not express the whole truth upon this important subject. The highest type of piety recognized by the churches of the popular religion in the United States *does not include*, but on the contrary, *does exclude*, such an estimation of the rights of man as would demand for the colored man and woman equality of civil and social standing with the white. I mean to assert these two things respecting the highest type of (self-styled) "Evangelical religion" in the United States, as represented by the Park Street, Essex Street, Central, and Old South churches of Boston; first, that their most pious communicant would not find his reputation for piety in the eyes of his brethren diminished in the slightest degree by his refusal, on the ground of color or race, to receive a colored man at his table, or in his carriage or pew, or a colored child in the class at school with his children, or to sign a petition or document in aid of the recovery of civic or social rights for such persons; and next, that active interest and continuous exertion in relation to matters of this sort *would unfavorably affect* a man's reputation for piety in the eyes of those churches, and any persistent attempt to elicit from them a practical recognition of this department of human rights would cause the mover to be stigmatized as a disturber of the peace of the church — a troubler of Israel.

This is neither a hasty nor a careless statement. I feel fully authorized to make it, on the grounds following: a large acquaintance, and numerous conversations, extending over a period of twenty years, with clergymen and church members, upon the subjects above mentioned; a careful notice of the attitude of these classes towards the colored people, towards the abolitionists, and towards the few of their own church members who fraternized with either abolitionists or blacks; and a careful scrutiny into the circumstances and true meaning of facts like the following: —

In the year 1830, a colored man bought and paid for a pew in Park Street church, then and since the headquarters of "orthodoxy" in Boston. He occupied it, with his family, a Sunday forenoon, but on returning in the afternoon, a constable, employed by the church committee, forcibly pre-

vented his entrance; the prudential committee wrote him a prohibitory\* letter; and the church, in a church meeting called thereafter for the express purpose, *voted* that he should not be allowed to occupy his own pew. They then proceeded to discess, in five or six meetings following, each opened and closed with prayer, the most convenient and effective way of excluding the whole colored race from equal participation in their worship. Finally, at the suggestion of one who bore, while he lived, the very highest reputation for piety in that church, a new pew deed was framed, containing a provision enabling them to effect their purpose, and the pews of that church are still held under that deed. It has been so perfectly obvious that any similar attempt would meet the like result, that the trial has never been repeated in Boston. A Baptist church, however, (Rev. Baron Stow's, in Rowe Street,) has guarded itself against such attempts by inserting in its pew deeds the restriction that the pews shall be sold only to "respectable white persons." Whoever of that congregation is not a saint can at least claim the credit of being a respectable white sinner.

In the earlier years of the Anti-Slavery effort in Boston, before it became absolutely certain that the clergy were to be opposers and not helpers of it, the prayers of the churches on Sundays were hundreds of times requested, in the ordinary form, by Anti-Slavery men and women, in behalf of slaves whose cases were then before the public, and hundreds of times refused. That I might assure myself whether any change had taken place in the twelve or fifteen intervening years, I made another trial, as follows.

The Old South church (Rev. Dr. Blagden's, equally with Park Street church the headquarters of Boston orthodoxy) has for many years maintained in its vestry a daily morning prayer meeting. Finding it customary to present requests, sometimes verbal and sometimes written, that particular bodies or individuals might be made the subjects of special prayer, one morning in May, 1851, while the Boston court house was in chains, and the case of the kidnapped Sims yet unfinished, I handed in the following note:—

"The prayers of this congregation are requested in behalf of a brother who is now in imminent danger of being torn away from the religious privileges of Boston, and carried as a slave to Georgia, where the laws forbid him to read the Bible; also, that God would be pleased to arouse the churches of this city to a sense of the duty of *not* delivering again to his master the servant who has escaped from his master unto them."

This note was presented during the singing of a hymn. The chairman, (Rev. Dorus Clarke,) having cast his eye over it, beckoned to Deacon Safford, who sat near him, and after he also had read the note, they held a brief whispered conference together. The purport of this I can only conjecture, but as the note was not read to the meeting, nor any allusion whatever made to it, I presume they decided that the poor man who had fallen among thieves belonged to another parish; that they were neither his "keepers" nor his "neighbors," and that the interests of *their* Zion would prosper quite as well whether he were adjudged a slave or a freeman.

\* BOSTON, March 6, 1830.

MR. FREDERICK BRINSLEY.

Sir: The Prudential Committee of Park Street Church notify you not to occupy any pew on the lower floor of Park Street Meeting House on any Sabbath, or on any other day during the time of divine worship, after this date; and if you go there with such intent, you hazard the consequences. The pews in the upper galleries are at your service.

GEORGE ODIORNE.  
*for the Committee.*

Not choosing, however, to content myself with inferences, I went to the desk after meeting, and asked Mr. Clarke why he had not read the note. He replied, "It was thought best not to read it; we have had nothing of this sort here for a long time, [it is perhaps quite time to begin, I suggested,] and just in the peculiar state of things among us now, [indications of a 'revival.'] it seemed best not to introduce it." "Is that a reason for not *praying*?" said I. He replied, "We thought it best, all things considered, to hold on upon it." Another person, a constant attendant of the prayer meeting, who had read the note while we were talking, now said, "You did perfectly right, brother Clarke."

I was not in the least surprised at these results; neither was I surprised when, on the death, some time after, of the deacon who joined the reverend chairman in rejecting Thomas Sims's petition for prayers, the brethren of the prayer meeting united in extolling him as a pattern of pious excellence.

Now let us take a glance at the relation of the popular religion in Boston to slavery, anti-slavery, and the social position of the people of color. Park Street church turns a colored man, because he is colored, out of a pew which he has bought and paid for, and then votes that no colored man shall be allowed even to buy a pew any more among them; and their minister says nothing against it. Rowe Street church votes that only respectable white persons shall own pews among them; and their minister says nothing against it. The minister of the Old South church publicly defends slavery from the Bible, and his people agree with him. To carry out their idea of the best mode of promoting piety and good morals, they establish a daily meeting for prayer and exhortation. Whatever is "their hearts' sincere desire" in the departments of religion and good morals, it is appropriate to express in that meeting, to God by prayer, to men by exhortation. A man, who represents himself as a member of an evangelical church in communion with them, is kidnapped in their own city, and about to be enslaved for life in a region where the laws forbid him to read the Bible. His friend asks their prayers, exhortations, and efforts in his behalf. All these are refused, jointly refused by three persons, each a representative of the highest form of piety cultivated by that church and that meeting, and refused *because* piety is just then in an unusually flourishing state among them. Dr. Lyman Beecher, the father of Mrs. Stowe, is one of the most constant attendants on that meeting, and one of the main pillars in its management. He knows that their form of piety excludes anti-slavery, and includes pro-slavery; yet, far from protesting against it, he fraternizes with, and supports it. He knows that the Rev. Mr. Blagden, their pastor, defends slavery from the Bible, yet he fully authenticates and recommends him as a Christian and a minister of the *Gospel*. A few ministers of that denomination, among whom is Henry Ward Beecher, the brother of Mrs. Stowe, hate slavery, and, though thinking themselves obliged to acquiesce in its indefinite continuance at the South, strenuously oppose its extension, and also the surrender of fugitive slaves from their own region. They all know that Dr. Blagden defends slavery from the Bible, and favors the surrender of fugitive slaves. But they all authenticate and recommend him as a Christian and a minister of the *Gospel*, in good as well as regular standing. Pro-slavery in their view, however unsatisfactory as a trait of character, is not anti-Christian; not incompatible with fervent piety, a truly Christian character, or the adequate fulfilment of the Christian ministry. And thus, even those among the clergy who hate slavery, throw over it the cloak of Christian charity, and join hands with its most thorough defenders.

7. Besides the numerous *ordinary* cases, like the above, in which the clergy fraternize with pro-slavery as perfectly compatible with the Christian character, I wish to mention two especially prominent and noteworthy cases.

Rev. Nathan Lord, a Presbyterian clergyman, President of Dartmouth College, in Hanover, N. H., has long devoted himself to the defence of slavery, reading each year a lecture to that effect before the class about to graduate from his college. In the year 1855, he extended the sphere of his operations by publishing two bulky pamphlets, addressed "To Ministers of the Gospel, of all denominations, on Slavery," in which he stated and defended the three following propositions:—

"Slavery is an institution of God according to Natural Religion.

"It is also an institution of God according to Revealed Religion.

"It is also perfectly consistent with the law of love."

No protest has been made against Dr. Lord by his sect, or by any part of it, or by any of the (self-styled) "Evangelical" sects, in communion with it. They hold, and have expressed, various opinions about the speculative correctness of his position, but do not hold it incompatible with the character of a Christian, or of a Christian minister.

In 1854, the Rev. Nehemiah Adams, pastor of the Essex Street (Orthodox Congregational) church, in Boston, and bearing the highest reputation for orthodox piety, published a book called "A South-Side View of Slavery," in which he praises slavery, as now carried on at the South, both generally and in its most characteristic particulars, defending it from the Bible, and on religious as well as other grounds, wishing he could apply its mode of operations in Boston, seriously suggesting the advantages of a renewal of the African slave trade, and echoing Daniel Webster's position (above referred to) in the following words, which, however well suited to the last desperate struggle of a profligate politician, are no less than amazing in the mouth of one who claims to be a minister of the Gospel.

"While it [the Constitution of the United States] remains, *all our appeals to a HIGHER LAW are fanaticism.*" — p. 128.

The point to which I wish to direct the attention of my readers is this. Since Dr. Adams has thus identified himself, his wishes, his efforts, his reputation as a Christian minister, his influence as a writer of religious books, and his credit as an interpreter of the Bible and the Christian system, with *the defence of slavery as it is now practised in the Southern States*, not only has no protest been made by his sect, or any part of it, or any of the (self-styled) "Evangelical" bodies in communion with it, impeaching him as having thereby forfeited the character of a Christian, and especially that of a Christian minister, but, on the contrary, the professors, lay and clerical, of the popular religion have seemed to take especial pains to fraternize with him, and to publish to the world their undiminished confidence in him *as a Christian minister*. Thus, he has been chosen one of the executive committee of the American Tract Society, whose function includes the examination of books and tracts proposed for publication, each member having the absolute power of prohibition; he has preached the annual sermon before that great representative of orthodoxy, the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions; he presided at the opening session of that prayer and conference meeting formed by the combined "Evangelical" churches of Boston which filled Winter Street church every morning of "Anniversary Week," 1855; he was chosen to preach the sermon at an installation in Providence, R. I.; and to make a dedicatory prayer at the opening of the new rooms of the Mercantile Library Association in Boston; and to open

with prayer the May term of the United States Circuit Court in Boston, 1855; and last, not least, he was suggested by the editor of *The Independent* (a religious newspaper with which Mrs. Stowe and Henry Ward Beecher are connected as regular contributors) as a satisfactory person to write a tract upon slavery for the American Tract Society, and thus remove from that body the reproach — which has become somewhat burdensome of late — that they have never issued a tract upon that subject. *The Independent* was so considerate as to suggest to Dr. Adams that such a tract need not “meddle with the vexed question of abolition,” and so mindful of the credit of its clerical brother as to assure its readers that they might expect to find such a tract “clear, dispassionate, earnest, full of a holy unction.” (See Note at the end of this Tract.)

Let us now look at the sum of the whole matter.

The government of the United States, which has always sustained slavery, appealing to the Constitution as its sufficient authority, has of late years manifestly directed its chief power and activity to that end.

A certain proportion of the clergy of every sect buy, sell, and hold slaves; maintain from the Bible the right to do so as Christians; maintain from the Constitution the right to do so as citizens; denounce abolitionism as a compound of treason and infidelity, and exhort their people, both as Christians and citizens, to defend the system of slavery, and stand by the government which is already defending it for them.

A smaller number of the clergy, though not holding slaves themselves, occupy the same position with the former class in every other respect.

A far greater number of the clergy, amounting to a decided majority in all the principal sects, feeling no special interest in the slaves, and no impulse to join, far less to initiate, a revolutionary movement in their behalf, finding their consciences somewhat disturbed, and their quiet materially so, by the censures of the Abolitionists, and being already in bonds of ecclesiastical union with the two classes of clergymen previously mentioned, take what seems to them the easiest course, — defending their clerical allies by echoing *their* justification of slavery from the Bible, and doing what they can to neutralize the censures of the Abolitionists by echoing the current calumnies against them.

Lastly, the small remaining proportion of the clergy, who, with or without the aid of the abolitionists, have attained “a realizing sense” of the essential viciousness of slavery, and see how it depraves the South, injures the North, corrupts the nation at home, disgraces it abroad, obstructs education and improvement, undermines morality and subverts religion, as well as oppresses the slave, would be glad to make an energetic and uncompromising warfare with slavery, but find themselves fettered by two considerations: First, the Constitution authorizes slavery. The Constitution, the work of their venerated forefathers, the basis of their country’s laws, protects the very thing which they wish to destroy; and, though the answer to this objection seems plain enough when they remember what Peter and John said to *their* \* Constitution, and though a glow of generous ardor fills their souls when they recall the answer of Shadrach and his companions to *their* † Constitution, the thought next comes up that the elder leaders\* of their sect,

\* “Whether it be right in the sight of God to hearken unto you more than unto God, Judge ye. We cannot but speak.”

† “Our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace, and he will deliver us. But if not, be it known unto thee, O king, that we will not serve thy gods, nor worship the golden image which thou hast set up.”



the heads of their theological school, the editors of their strictest, religious newspapers, all wise as well as good and pious men, take the opposite view; they do not feel like entering into a controversy with *them*, as well as into a war with the actual slaveholders; so they are strongly tempted to compromise the matter, as their fathers did, and to direct their active exertions only against the *extension* of slavery, either tacitly acquiescing in its indefinite continuance within its present boundaries, or explicitly pledging themselves, as Henry Ward Beecher did, (in Park Street church, Feb., 1854.) to abandon and discountenance all agitation, and allow to slavery and the slave trade undisturbed and indefinite continuance within their present limits, if they would desist from the occupancy of any new territories.

I say, the small number of clergymen now under consideration are strongly tempted to this compromising course by finding a decided majority, both in number and weight, of their own ecclesiastical connection arrayed against them in relation to the supremacy of the Constitution. But the second obstacle, now to be mentioned, a far more weighty one, effectually *decides* them to take that course. They find themselves already thoroughly committed, by the whole ecclesiastical system under which they have been living, and preaching, and making converts, and building up churches, to the concession that the men who practise and defend slavery are *Christians*. Slaveholders are members, in good and regular standing, of great numbers of the churches of their denomination. They practise no concealment; they were converted while slaveholders, (probably by the preaching of a slaveholding minister;) were fairly examined by the church committee, (probably slaveholders;) were accepted as regenerate men, children of God, and heirs of heaven, without a word expressed or implied in condemnation of their slaveholding, and perhaps joined a church which held slaves in its corporate capacity. How are they to be laid hold of, called to account, and subjected to discipline according to the rules of the church, for that which, equally existing five or ten years ago, was no bar to their admission then? And if they cannot be subjected to discipline, how are they to be accused at all, or how is their slaveholding position to be censured? The truth is, that how much soever they may have infringed justice, humanity, the golden rule, and the Christian system, they have *not* infringed the laws of the church, as understood and administered by its government.

*Abolitionists* would know very well what to do in this situation. They would see that the church was involved in a *reductio ad absurdum*; that its rules were grossly deficient, and needed immediate revision; they would set themselves to that work at once, and if, after a fair trial, their numbers, strength, and influence proved insufficient to accomplish it, they would leave that organization, and find or make a better. They would at all events keep clear of the enormous blunder of assuming the body which shelters the "sum of all villainies" in its bosom to be the "church of Christ."

But our clergymen, not being prepared for movements so energetic and radical, not venturing even for a moment to entertain the hypothesis that *their* church is any thing but a church of Christ, withhold their hands from the work, leave the slave a slave, the slaveholding church members and ministers obnoxious but unimpeached oppressors, and the church a synagogue of Satan, and do nothing; — nothing but protest, with the whole strength of their lungs, that slavery is so thoroughly and hopelessly evil that it ought not for a moment to be admitted into Kansas. As if that which is too bad for Kansas was not just as much, and for the very same reasons, too bad for Kentucky; as if that could be too bad for Kansas which is *not* too bad for the church of Christ on earth, and the kingdom of God in heaven!



These things being so, what are the Abolitionists to do ? For twenty-five years they have been demanding the abolition of slavery, in the name and on the grounds of Christianity. What are they to do when they find nearly the whole body of American clergy, (some by direct and open demand, and some by tacit allowance, but all *effectively*.) giving shelter to slavery in the church, declaring the practice of it to be perfectly consistent with piety; declaring opposition to it to be opposition to God's system; and assuming that where piety is most fervent and effective, there opposition to slavery is most to be deprecated ? What ? Just what the engineer does when he finds the trunk of a tree across his railroad track ! — take immediate measures for its removal, or at least *towards* its removal ; and if a body of men in black coats and white cravats say that the tree is theirs, and that they choose to keep it in that position, apply himself, by all legitimate means, to the work of *their* removal.

This is what the Abolitionists *have* done. Finding the representatives and managers of the American religion holding towards slavery precisely the attitude described above, in the New England Anti-Slavery Convention, assembled in Boston, May 30th, 1855, they framed, fully discussed, and unanimously adopted the following preamble and resolutions : —

“Whereas, the popular religion of the land is thoroughly impregnated with the slaveholding spirit, and from the organization of the government to the present time has given its sanction to a colossal and ever-enlarging system of robbery, licentiousness, heathenism, and soul murder, until the victims thereof are counted by millions ; and

“Whereas, an extensive revival of this religion is said to be going on in Boston, under the sanction and with the coöperation of such men as the Rev. Dr. Nehemiah Adams and the Rev. Dr. Blagden, the defenders of slavery against every assault upon it ; therefore,

“Resolved, That the multiplication of converts to such a religion, instead of indicating any progress in the cause of justice, freedom, and Christianity, or furnishing any occasion for congratulation, is a sure sign of moral degeneracy, judicial blindness, and pharisaical malignity, to be denounced as an imposture ; and that such a ‘revival’ is only a device of time-serving hirelings to withdraw attention from the reforms of the age, and especially from the anti-slavery movement ; to affect a zeal for God for the benefit of their craft ; and to shield themselves from the condemnation which they deserve for their treachery to the rights of man.

“Resolved, That the charge brought by Abolitionists against the Northern church, that it is the bulwark of American slavery, finds its justification in much that transpires in what are denominated the religious anniversary meetings ; and as a special illustration of our meaning, we would point to the prayer meeting in the Winter Street church, which was opened with prayer by the Rev. Nehemiah Adams, — a man standing before the world as the confessed champion of slavery, and yet retaining the unimpaired confidence and fellowship of the evangelical (so called) churches. To such assemblies we commend the consideration of the 13th, 14th, and 15th verses of the 1st chapter of Isaiah : ‘Bring no more vain oblations ; incense is an abomination unto me ; the new moons and sabbaths, the calling of assemblies, I cannot away with ; it is iniquity, even the solemn meeting.’ ‘Your new moons and your appointed feasts my soul hateth ; they are a trouble unto me ; I am weary to bear them.’ ‘And when ye spread forth your hands, I will hide mine eyes from you ; yea, when ye make many prayers, I will not hear : your hands are full of blood.’”

I have selected this particular series of resolutions among many of the

same class that have for years past been voted by the Abolitionists, because I find here one of the strongest and fullest expressions of their judgment that the popular religion is at variance with Christianity, of the particulars in which they find such variance to exist, and of the source through which they see this corruption to have been perpetuated and to be now upheld. Founding themselves on the very essence of the system which Jesus taught, and accepting his summary of it \* as their rule of action, and relying for the overthrow of slavery upon the clearness with which they can show its absolute contrariety to that system, and finding the power of this contrast neutralized in the public mind by a false idea already fixed there by the clergy of what Christianity is, what it necessarily implies, what it includes, and what it excludes, they see the exposure of this false teaching to be a duty imposed on them by Christianity not less than by Anti-Slavery. Yet for this very course, followed for this very purpose, they have been called infidels !

The Abolitionists have taken, and hold, and mean still to hold, until it is proved to be erroneous, just this position towards the American pro-slavery religion. Remembering those in bonds "as bound with them," recognizing their "neighbor" and their "brother" in the black man who has fallen among thieves, and seeing the active or silent partners of those thieves in the Priest and the Levite who are passing by on the other side, they call upon the nation which practises this wickedness, and especially upon those in the nation who acknowledge their religious responsibilities and duties, to repent, *immediately* to repent, and immediately to commence the work of reformation. They rely solely upon what Paul called "the foolishness of preaching." They point out plainly, in the sight of all men, who are the oppressed, and what justice and humanity require for their relief; they also point out who are the oppressors, and who their accomplices in church and state; and they cry unceasingly to the whole people, in the words of Jeremiah, "Thus saith the Lord, Execute judgment *in the morning*, and deliver him that is spoiled out of the hand of the oppressor." In view of the example of prophets, apostles, and martyrs, of the plain commands of God, and of the nature of religion itself, they see not how any other course is open to them; and they say with Luther, when *he* was persecuted by those who called themselves successors of the apostles, "*Here we stand! we can no other! God help us!*"

And we know that he will help us.

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#### NOTE.

I am happy to be able, before these pages have passed through the press, to add to them a record of the two following transactions, which, however varying in form from the statements of the tract, corroborate them in substance.

At the annual meeting of the American Tract Society, held in Boston, on Tuesday, May 27, 1856, as they were about to proceed to the election of officers, Dr. Kirk rose, and called attention to the fact, that on many of the tickets the name of Rev. Dr. Nehemiah Adams was left out, and Mr.

\* Matt. vii. 12, and xxii. 37 to 40.

Stone's name substituted. He wished to know whether this was designed as a chastisement of Dr. Adams for his "South-Side View of Slavery." He did not believe Dr. A. should be chastised, and thought that to remove him would be injurious to the cause.

The balloting was then stopped, and a discussion ensued, one party strongly urging the reelection of Dr. Adams, and the other taking the ground that it was undesirable that an extremist, *an abolitionist or a defender of slavery*, should be chosen on the Executive Committee, and that though Dr. Adams was as much respected as Mr. Stone, [an opposer of the *extension* of slavery,] and was moreover conscientious, high-minded, and pious, a man who had always done his duty well, yet since, in the matter of slavery, he did not so well represent the views of New England as Mr. Stone, the latter was the more satisfactory candidate.

Before the vote was taken, Dr. Adams rose, strongly urged his own reelection, on the ground, among others, that "he had the confidence of the South," and caused to be read recommendations of his "South-Side View" from the "Christian Observer," Philadelphia, the "New York Observer," Rev. Dr. Heman Humphrey, and many other individuals and newspapers.

The old board was reelected unanimously, with the exception of Dr. Adams. On the contested point, the vote stood :

Whole number of votes, 99.	Rev. Dr. Adams had 43;
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Necessary to a choice, 50.	Rev. A. L. Stone had 56;
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and was elected.

The above statement is condensed from the report in the Boston Evening Traveller, a paper which will certainly not be accused of warping its account in a manner unfavorable to *Dr. Adams*. I propose to look critically at this transaction, estimate its just value and significance, and see whether it indicates any thing like repentance or reformation in a body which has held, up to this time, a position auxiliary to slavery.

It will be noticed that not only does one of these parties claim for Dr. Nehemiah Adams the credit of exemplary piety and thoroughly Christian character, but the other admits this, without a syllable of dissent. The fact that he praises, heartily supports, and quotes Scripture in justification of an enormous system of oppression, does not, in their view, interfere with his claim to be regarded as a Christian; his representation of God and Christ as authorizing the strong to live on the enforced labor of the weak, paying them therefor only such *wages* as they pay to oxen and horses, does not, in their view, interfere with his being a faithful messenger from that God, a regenerate disciple and true minister of the Gospel of that Christ; he wishes that more Africans might be brought as slaves to South Carolina, and that the restrictions of South Carolinian slavery might be applied to certain classes in Boston: those among the voters of the Tract Society who differ with him in this, consider it a mere difference of opinion, as of one man preferring a ride and another a walk, and as not in the least detracting from his true discipleship to the *Saviour*, who came to break every yoke, and to let the oppressed go free; they concede him to be a pious man, and a Christian minister, and would take the Lord's supper from his hand just as readily as if in his professional and individual life he helped, instead of hindering, the men and women who have fallen among thieves. And yet the "Independent," which stands nearer to a reformatory position than any other (so called) "religious" paper in the country, says of this affair — "What was actually done at the meeting of the Tract Society was *exactly*

what we wished to have done." The Italics are the editor's. Such is the advance guard of reform in the church. I claim that the above transaction corroborates the general position taken in this tract, namely, that in relation to slavery, the clergy and the churches have been corrupters, while the Abolitionists have been defenders and preservers, of true Christianity.

If the Tract Society's operations were conducted in advancement of the Christian, instead of the American, religion, and if its members were really solicitous that it should "promote the interests of vital godliness and good morals," they would have voted *unanimously* for the exclusion of Dr. Adams, on the following grounds:—

Whereas, Dr. Adams distinctly takes and persistently holds the position, that a Christian may buy another Christian, and thus acquire the right to hold him as a piece of property; that he may keep him enrolled among his goods and chattels, and subject to the consequences of such enrolment; that he may compel him to work without his own consent either to the work itself or the compensation properly belonging to it, and that he may give or sell him, as property, to any one he pleases, thus transferring a real ownership, which may be used or again transferred at the buyer's pleasure,—

And whereas, he distinctly takes and persistently holds the position that God authorizes, and that Christianity allows, such purchase, and ownership, and sale of one Christian by another,—

And whereas, it is obvious that this position is at once a gross libel upon the character of our Heavenly Father, and a reversal of the system taught us by his Son Jesus Christ, and ruinous to "the interests of vital godliness," and utterly subversive of "good morals,"—

And whereas, the holder of such opinions, having renounced and denied the very essence of Christianity, namely, the recognition of a just and good God, who enjoins justice and goodness upon his creatures, necessarily shows himself incompetent to decide as to what publications will, and what will not, "promote the interests of vital godliness and good morals"; therefore,

Resolved, That the Rev. Dr. Adams be removed from the Executive Committee, as being incompetent to its work, because apostate from its principles.

Our position is, that a vote substantially like this would have been unanimously passed, if the Tract Society were doing a Christian work in a Christian manner. Instead of this, in an unusually large meeting of voters, we find them unanimous in the opposite direction, some declaring and *the rest admitting*, Dr. Adams to be a thoroughly pious and Christian man, while the bare majority which displaced him, did so only on the ground that he did not represent their *opinions* so well as the other candidate. Not a member of the Tract Society even intimated that the attempt to justify slavery by religious considerations, and to represent God and Christianity as upholding it, was reproachful to God, libellous to Christianity, and sufficient proof of unfitness for the work of selecting religious tracts. It was not at all that Dr. Adams was unfit, but that Mr. Stone was *preferable*, that the former was refused by a bare majority, fifty-six to forty-three.

Suppose that Dr. Adams's book, instead of denying slavery to be a sin, had denied, at equal length and with equal thoroughness, that men were born totally depraved; that *that* position had been before the public for a year, and that Dr. Adams continued to defend it!—do you think that *then* we should have had a mere preference, by a bare majority, of some other brother in the same connection, with an express admission of Dr. Adams's Christian character? Would the commendations of Dr. Heman Humphrey,

and Dr. Worcester, of Salem, and of the *New York Observer*, then have been forthcoming?

To enable our readers to understand how merely superficial is this rejection of Dr. Adams, and how far it is from denoting any reformation in the Tract Society, one or two more facts must be mentioned.

There are two Societies, one in Boston and one in New York, each calling itself "The American Tract Society." Of these, the former was first founded, having been in operation a dozen years, more or less, before the establishment of the New York Society. The latter adopted the tracts already published of the Boston Society, as a basis of operations, and then took upon itself the whole business of publishing for both Societies, and the Boston depository has ever since been supplied from the New York depository. Each Society has its own board of officers, and Dr. Adams was chosen on the Executive Committee of both Societies. His displacement from the Boston committee does not in the least affect his position on the New York one. But the peculiarity of the affair is that the Boston Society, which has dropped him, does not publish any tracts of its own, but supplies itself from the depository of the New York Society, which retains him. So the distributors of tracts, whether in Boston or New York, or elsewhere, will still enjoy whatever advantage there may be in Dr. Adams's supervision, and must still suffer the inconvenience of his absolute censorship over all matter of an anti-slavery cast in the manuscripts offered to the Tract Society.

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The last week in May, (called "Anniversary Week," from the assemblage of the clergy and other representatives of the churches to transact the annual business of their religious and sectarian associations in Boston,) came in 1856 at a time when the mass of the community was excited, to a degree never witnessed before, by recent demonstrations of outrage and violence perpetrated by the representatives of slavery in Washington and in Kansas. After "indignation meetings" had been held by laymen in Boston and many other places in reference to these two events, and the press had abounded in details of them, the clergy held a meeting in Boston. I copy the resolutions passed by it, with one specimen of accelerating and one of retarding influence, from the report in the *Boston Evening Telegraph*, Friday, May 30th.

#### "MINISTERS' MEETING ON THE SUMNER OUTRAGE AND KANSAS AFFAIRS.

"A ministers' meeting was held Thursday afternoon, in the Meionaon, to consider the present position of affairs with relation to the outrage committed on Senator Sumner, and the condition of the country with reference to Kansas, &c. Rev. Mr. James, of Worcester, called the meeting to order, and nominated Rev. Prof. Stowe, of Andover, to take the chair. Prayer was then offered by Rev. Mr. Wallace, of Manchester, N. H. The meeting was very large and highly respectable.

Mr. Stowe expressed his thanks to the meeting for calling him to the chair. He thought there had been too much caution with reference to the



slavery question. We are reaping the fruits of our own doing. Slavery is a national sin, and the work of our fathers is all to be done over again. Unless there is a different tone manifested in the churches and throughout the entire North, the outrages recently committed will prove only the beginning of troubles. The first work of the ministry is penitence for their past neglect, and the second is to see that that neglect shall exist no longer. There must be a determined resistance to the slave power. We are, said he, in just the beginning of our trials.

Rev. Mr. Dexter was appointed secretary.

On motion of Rev. Mr. Burrell, of Easton, a business committee of five was appointed to prepare resolutions for the meeting, consisting of Rev. Messrs. Russel, of Canton, James, of Worcester, Walcott, of Providence, Drummond, of Lewiston Falls, Me., and Rev. Mr. Wallace, of Manchester, N. H.

Mr. Bransecomb, of Kansas, was called up by Rev. Mr. Dexter, and was received with applause. He left Lawrence on the 16th day of this month. There is no greater oppression to be heard of than that which now afflicts Kansas. He then gave a narrative of the atrocities committed in Kansas in connection with Gov. Reeder and others.

[During Mr. B.'s remarks the audience applauded; whereupon Rev. Dr. Worcester, of Salem, hoped that if any laymen had come into the meeting with the usages of political gatherings, they would remember that this was a meeting of ministers. Rev. Mr. Dexter remarked that the ministers had themselves applauded, and immediately the hall resounded with applause ten times greater than before.]

The Committee then reported, through Rev. Mr. James, the following resolutions:—

In view of the ceaseless aggression of the Slave Power in our land, and especially in view of the recent brutal attempts to extinguish free speech in the Congress of the United States, and take the lives of free men in Kansas;

We, Ministers of the Gospel, to the end that we may bear our united and efficient testimony before all men, do hereby calmly, prayerfully, and as in the sight of God, embody our deep religious convictions, and our unalterable purposes, in the following resolutions:

Resolved, That the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ is the only antidote for sin, and the only secure basis either of personal character or of political institutions; adapted alike to the family, the church, and the state, and precisely fitted to work out in them all the highest and noblest ends.

Resolved, That we can entertain no hope that American slavery will be done away, or its countless usurpations peacefully cease, except as the result of a widely-increased conviction of its hatefulness in the sight of God, and its inherent and inevitable antagonism to the spirit of Christ. And we do therefore pledge to each other our mutual coöperation, sympathy, and aid, in the work of developing, through the pulpit, the church, and the press, an enlightened public sentiment on this whole subject.

Resolved, That the murderous assault upon our honored senator, Charles Sumner, is not only a dastardly assault upon his person, and through him upon the right of free speech, but also a wound which we individually feel, and by which our very hearts bleed; and whether he shall recover, or sink into a martyr's grave,—which may God avert,—we will address ourselves unto prayer and effort that this sorrowful event may become the glorious resurrection of national virtue, and the triumph of freedom.



Resolved, In view of the present crisis in our national affairs, and especially the awful perils that impend over Kansas and the land, we see a new exhibition of the essentially corrupt and corrupting spirit of slavery, and a new necessity that we, as ministers of the gospel and lovers of liberty, should gird ourselves afresh to oppose its aggressions, and secure the final triumph of freedom.

The resolutions were then taken up *seriatim*, and discussed.

Rev. Dr. Worcester doubted about the preamble, and thought that some different action might be proper. He had been exceedingly pained at demonstrations of applause, and thought it did not become ministers to act like political men. It would be better to have a day of fasting and prayer."

After a long debate, the preamble and resolutions were unanimously adopted, and it was also voted that they be signed by the officers of the meeting, and sent to the Massachusetts Senators and Representatives in Washington.

The meeting then adjourned.

Now let us consider what are the weight and significance of this transaction.

The Abolitionists have for twenty-three years been trying to arouse the people (and especially the clergy and the churches) to a consciousness of the fact that *slavery is a heinous sin in the sight of God, requiring immediate repentance and reformation, not only in the slaveholders, but in those who are so politically and ecclesiastically connected with it and responsible for it as the people, AND ESPECIALLY THE RELIGIOUS PEOPLE, of the North.* If this proposition be true, the clergy should have taken the lead in preaching and enforcing it. They have not done this; they have constantly maligned and obstructed the Abolitionists, who *did* do it; and now, *after* the masses of the people have emphatically spoken, without the slightest confession of their long-continued sins of omission and commission in this matter, they *pledge each other their mutual coöperation, sympathy, and aid* in doing what every one of them ought long since individually to have done, *ex officio*, from the very fact that he assumes to be a minister of the gospel.

It remains to be seen whether they will discharge even this beginning of their duty; and I beg every reader of these pages to notice whether the ministers nearest to his observation fulfil this pledge any farther than they are crowded into it by their people, moving slowly and timidly in the direction indicated by the Abolitionists.

It is highly probable that a vivid sentiment of indignation against the outrageous assaults lately perpetrated upon Sumner in Washington, and the Free State people in Kansas, felt and *expressed in public meetings by so large a portion of the people*, may bring out a crop of sermons upon the same topics, expressed with a warmth so unusual in those compositions as to *seem* like spontaneous movement and progress. It is only seeming. The sermonizers follow, not lead, the movements of the people; and whenever Charles Sumner recovers from his wounds, (if Providence shall so ordain it,) and whenever the pending question concerning Kansas shall be settled, by her becoming, possibly a free, probably a slave State, if events do not widely vary from all the analogies of the last fifty years, this hastily aroused excitement of the people will subside, (as did the almost unparalleled interest aroused by "Uncle Tom's Cabin,") they will return to their farms and their merchandise, will yield impunity to the outrage upon their rights inflicted through Charles Sumner, as formerly to that inflicted through Samuel Hoar, and will take an *established* slavery in Kansas as quietly as they now

do in South Carolina; and then, I say, if all analogies do not fail, the sermons will drop down to their ordinary level, and the clergy will continue to be followers, not leaders, of the people. Meantime, while the temporary fervor lasts, mark carefully to how much such sermons pledge the speakers, and to what kind and amount of action they urge the people. It is very easy to condemn a brutal and cowardly assault, but will those persons trace it to its source — slavery; condemn that system as a whole, confess their own past shortcomings in relation to it, cut off their own ecclesiastical connection with it, and urge their people to immediate action for its utter overthrow? It is very easy to condemn the violence of an armed banditti, who, in defiance of constitutional law as well as right, have controlled the freedom of elections in Kansas; but will they trace *that* to its source — slavery; confess their own guilt in having tacitly consented to it so long, and warn their people that, until every vestige of it is rooted out, from church and state, and social life, in *every portion* of our country, the like dangers will neither be prevented, nor their own duties discharged? Those who carefully note, examine, and compare in relation to these matters, will see whether I prophesy truly or not.

Another point which may be profitably noted for careful observation, during the coming year, as indicating the practical relation of the clergy to slavery, is, whether the prayers of those who pray at all for the slave, in public, are made as an appropriate and intended preliminary to action, and followed by earnest exhortations to their people, to *do something, immediately*, towards the overthrow of the slave power, or whether prayer is proposed merely as a *substitute for action*, and a means of preventing discussion. *Before* the mass of the people had begun to think or talk about slavery, Professor Stuart counselled his theological students not to pray about it publicly, lest "agitation," and its follower, anti-slavery, should gain entrance into their churches; but if he were living *now*, as circumstances alter cases, he might pursue the same end by the very opposite means; just as Dr. Worcester, of Salem, (from whose church several members long since withdrew themselves, on account of his and its pro-slavery character,) after vainly trying to retain Dr. South-Side Adams on the Tract Society's committee, and to frown down the applause raised for resistance to the aggressions of slavery in Kansas, at the ministers' meeting, attempted to check even the feeble current of feeling manifested in their "Resolutions," by proposing to substitute for them "a day of fasting and prayer."

Perhaps we are now to find this policy practised by *many* of the clergy. Perhaps the latest counsel of Dr. Gannett and Dr. Kirk, to *wait and pray*, may be found by many others the most effective means of averting Anti-Slavery action. Those who thus counsel, are blind guides in religion, not less than in Anti-Slavery. The prayer that "availeth much" is not such as the wagoner offered to Hercules, a lazy attempt to persuade God to do *our* duty, but is accompanied and followed by strenuous and persevering action. God helps those who help themselves.

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*Published for gratuitous distribution, at the Office of the AMERICAN ANTI-SLAVERY SOCIETY, No. 138 Nassau Street, New York. Also to be had at the Anti-Slavery Offices, No. 21 Cornhill, Boston, and No. 31 North Fifth Street, Philadelphia.*



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